

Manifesto for a Fairer Society

The UK has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the developed world, and evidence shows that this harms our physical and mental health, hinders our education, damages our economy, restricts social mobility, reduces levels of trust and civic participation, and weakens the social ties that bind us.

We have **astronomical pay inequality**, with workers trapped on poverty wages while chief executives take home jackpot-like pay packets. Britain's top bosses are paid on average 165 times more than a nurse; 140 times more than a teacher; 132 times more than a police officer; and 312 times more than a care worker.

We have **staggering wealth inequality**, with the richest 1,000 people in Britain owning more wealth than the poorest 40% of the population put together.

We have a **housing crisis** which locks the vast majority of renters out of home ownership, with too many trapped in substandard housing, and an outdated council tax system that hits the poorest hardest.

We have a **shocking gap in healthy life expectancy** which condemns the poorest to 20 fewer years of healthy life than the richest.

We have **unacceptable attainment gaps** between equally bright children from richer and poorer backgrounds.

We have people falling through **gaping holes in our safety net**, a record high for food bank usage, rising death rates for babies and the frail elderly, and rising child poverty.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Inequality is not inevitable.

Here, The Equality Trust sets out its policy priorities for all political parties. To effectively tackle the social and economic inequality blighting our society and to achieve a fair Brexit, we need **fair work, fair tax, fair chances and a fair deal.**

Fair Work

- 1 Protect and progress workers' rights: strengthen trade union rights, introduce employment rights from day one, and ban forced zero-hours contracts.
- 2 Recognise the contribution of every worker: require large and medium-sized companies to publish the ratio of remuneration between the highest paid and the median employee, along with a justification of the ratio, annual changes to it, and a plan for its reduction.
- 3 Give workers a voice: require one third of the members of companies' executive boards to be comprised of employees, and require elected employee representatives on remuneration committees.
- 4 Give workers a genuine stake in their workplaces: promote industrial democracy in our economy by encouraging the growth of the co-operative and mutuals sector.

Fair Tax

- 5 Ensure the broadest shoulders bear the greatest burden: reinstate the 50p top rate of income tax, which affects approximately the top 1% of earners.
- 6 Transform council tax into a progressive property tax: re-evaluate properties and create new bands with higher rates for high value properties.
- 7 Explore the most effective ways of distributing wealth fairly and efficiently: establish an independent Commission on Wealth.
- 8 Ensure business benefits our society: strengthen measures to tackle tax avoidance, reverse the race to the bottom on corporation tax and prevent the UK from becoming a tax haven.

Fair Chances

- 9 Help level the playing field and ensure pupils' diverse needs are met: end selective education, properly fund a comprehensive education system for all, and introduce universal free school meals.
- 10 End child poverty: reinstate child poverty targets and commit to eliminating child poverty.
- 11 Reduce health inequalities and improve health for all: properly fund the NHS and social care, and address the root causes of poor health and the health gap.
- 12 End the two-tier justice system: abolish employment tribunal fees and restore legal aid.

Fair Deal

- 13 Tackle our housing crisis: establish a large scale house building programme, prioritising social housing and truly affordable housing, built to high quality and environmentally friendly standards. Ensure Local Housing Allowance rates rise in line with increases in local private rents.
- 14 Let low-income families keep more of the money they earn: restore Universal Credit work allowances and reduce the taper rate to 55%.
- 15 Ensure everyone can keep up with rising living costs: restore the link between annual increases in social security levels and inflation.
- 16 Ensure public bodies consider how their decisions affect inequality: commence the socio-economic duty in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

Will your local candidates tackle inequality?

Here are some suggested questions that we could all raise at hustings and other local and national events in the run up to the General Election to determine candidates' commitment to a fairer society:

- Would you support further tax cuts for billionaires over properly funding the NHS?
- What would you do about the fact that nurses who care for our loved ones are paid hundreds of times less than bosses at some of our country's biggest companies?
- Do you believe children should be segregated at age 11 by a grammar school system that benefits the rich and hurts the poor?

Will you support us?

The Equality Trust is working to reduce social and economic inequality in order to build a better society. But to do so we need your help. Our work depends on generous donations from individuals who share our vision. Please help support active campaigning for a fairer society by becoming a supporter of The Equality Trust.

- Please visit www.equalitytrust.org.uk/support-us to set up a Direct Debit; or
- Please send a cheque payable to The Equality Trust to: Freepost EQUALITY TRUST; or
- Please text EQUA16 £10 to 70070 to donate £10 (the JustGiving service accepts text donations of £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 and £10).

We also welcome applications to affiliate to The Equality Trust from business, trade unions and the public sector, as well as from co-ops, charities, social enterprises and campaign groups. Please visit www.equalitytrust.org.uk/affiliate-us to find out more.

And if you want to get involved in tackling inequality where you live, you can join or start a local equality group, just visit here: www.equalitytrust.org.uk/local-groups

Thank you for your support. It is hugely appreciated.

 THE EQUALITY TRUST

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